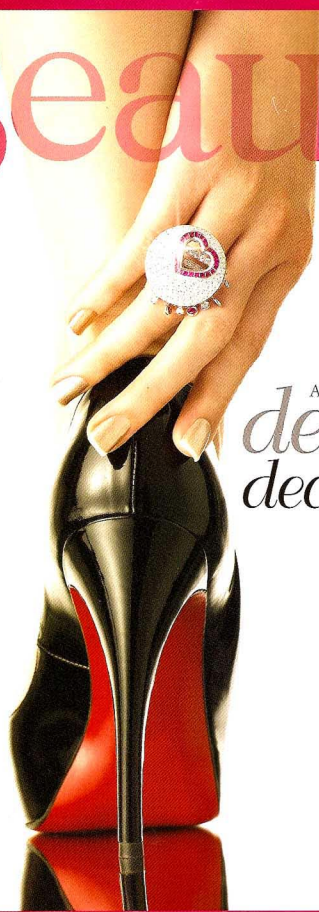


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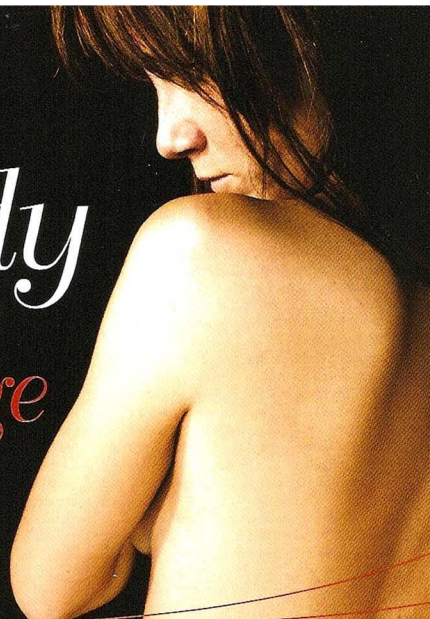
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"If not for the anaesthetic cream, my stomach would feel like it's being sliced open and set on fire. Would I do this again? Sure, I can deal with pain that is temporary"

TALK
TRIED & TESTED

We try: *Body Shape by Thermage*

Needles, acid peels and even lasers are nothing compared to the discomfort of the new Body Shape by Thermage treatment. Even self-proclaimed pain junkie JASMINE ALIMIN raises the white flag, but will do it again in a heart beat



history lesson

Thermage is a patented technology using Capacitive Radio Frequency (CRF) to tighten and contour the skin. Radio-frequency (RF) energy dispenses very high heat into deep layers of the skin where topical skincare can't reach.

During the procedure, the doctor uses a device known as ThermoCool which tightens and lifts, and also to smooth out wrinkles and put the spring back into lax skin. The ThermoCool uses a ThermoTip, which delivers radio-frequency energy to the skin. By doing so, a large volume of collagen in the deeper layers of the skin and its underlying tissue is heated, but the outer surface of the skin is cooled. This causes deep structures in the skin to tighten and shrink.

Over the years, FDA-approved Thermage has rolled out many variants for different parts of the body — like Face by Thermage for sagging jowls, Eyes by Thermage for eye bags and crow's feet, and Body by Thermage for loose abdominal pooches. They all use the same RF technology, but the tips come in different sizes for better accuracy.

The latest one launched this October in the US is Body Shape by Thermage, which uses the biggest ThermoTip available. It targets very deep layers of fat and tissue, helping to not just tighten skin, but also to take inches off and contour the silhouette.

who is it for?

Thermage procedures have been viewed as an anti-ageing remedy to firm up the skin of mature women who have lost skin density over time, women who develop excess abdominal flab after giving birth, and those who have loose skin after drastic weight loss. The new Body Shape by Thermage does even more — by firming jelly-bellies, muffin love-handles and shrinking arms and buttocks. It's ideal for people who are not significantly overweight, but want to reduce a little fat.

procedure

Singapore is the first country outside of the US that offers this treatment, The Sloane Clinic being one of them. I go into consult with attending aesthetician, Dr Low Chal Ling, and we quickly decide the best place to treat is my bulging belly.

Before the machine, I'm in the prep room getting my stomach numbed with anesthetic cream and letting it set for 15 minutes. The nurse then superimposes an ink grid over the skin to indicate the points where Dr Low should zap me. On the treatment bed, I lie down with my shirt up while Dr Low starts up the machine.

Dr Low controls the amount of RF energy to deliver optimal results at a comfort level I agree with (the higher it is, the better the efficacy, but the more the pain too). Supposedly, this new

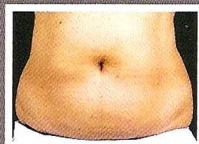
PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

A toned and tight tummy

The after-care of Thermage is minimal — just keep the weight down with a healthy diet and exercise. The results improve over the next few months with an optimal end result after about six months.



BEFORE
A slight bulge is to be treated on a medium-shaped build



AFTER
Results of six months later after Body Shape by Thermage, sustained by regular exercise — a two-inch loss around the waist, and a more taut belly

Body Shape by Thermage (\$6,000 for any body part) was administered at The Sloane Clinic, #03-01 Chevron House, Tel: 6533 2522

ThermoTip can reach to layers 79 per cent deeper than a medium tip (used in procedures like face tightening). However, heat stays under the skin for longer, so I'm in obvious pain after the first round.

The sensation is like that of a heated acupuncture needle pricking deep into my flesh and ejecting back out again in a millisecond. If not for the anaesthetic cream, my stomach would feel like it's being sliced open and set on fire.

After 30 minutes of hot zaps, my skin looks just a little pink on the outside, but feels raw on the inside. But I'm still able to skip-hop back to work.

results

I was only able to see a noticeable difference after two weeks when I grabbed less stomach fat as I sat down. It also does look less jiggly when I walk. According to Dr Low, the tightening and improvements will get better over a three to six month period. I'm just glad it's a one-time deal, and not a series of sweat-inducing, palpitating sessions.

It used to be that the only option to reduce fats was through very invasive methods, but with Body Shape by Thermage, there are no injections, no surgery and no downtime. It's suggested that we do this every two to three years to escape gravity. Would I do this again? Sure, I can deal with the temporary pain factor given the non-invasive toned-up gain benefit. ■